

REMARKS

Upon entry of the forgoing amendments, claims 1-50 are pending in this application with claims 19, 23, 27, and 28 being the actively pending independent claims. No claim is allowed.

Claims 19, 23, 27, and 28 have been amended to further particularly point out and distinctly claim subject matter regarded as the invention. Support for these changes may be found in the specification in FIGs. 4 and 5 and on page 12, lines 8-12 and page 14, lines 5-7, among others.

Claims 51-53 have been canceled, without prejudice.

The 35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection

Claims 19-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over *Smith et al.* (US 6,877,036 B1) in view of *Takahashi et al.* (US 6,259,705 B1). Claims 51-53 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over *Smith* in view of *Takahashi* and further in view of *Kunze et al.* (US 6,879,593 B1). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Generally, the Office Action implies that *Kunze* is prior art to the present application. This is untrue however. *Kunze* was filed on December 20, 1999. The present application was filed on September 30, 1999. This has the effect of removing *Kunze* as prior art. The independent claims 19, 23, 27, and 28 have been amended with the substance of claims 51-53. Correspondingly, claims 51-53 have been cancelled. This makes all of the currently pending claims allowable over the prior art.

In view of the above, it is respectfully asserted that the claims are now in condition for allowance.

Request for Allowance

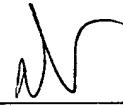
In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and an early allowance of this application are earnestly solicited.

If any matters remain which could be resolved in a telephone interview between the Examiner and the undersigned, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned to expedite resolution of any such matters. Please charge any additional required fee or credit any overpayment not otherwise paid or credited to our deposit account No. 50-1698.

Request for Entry of Amendment

Entry of this Amendment will place the Application in better condition for allowance, or at the least, narrow any issues for an appeal. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment is appropriate and is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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